nature net

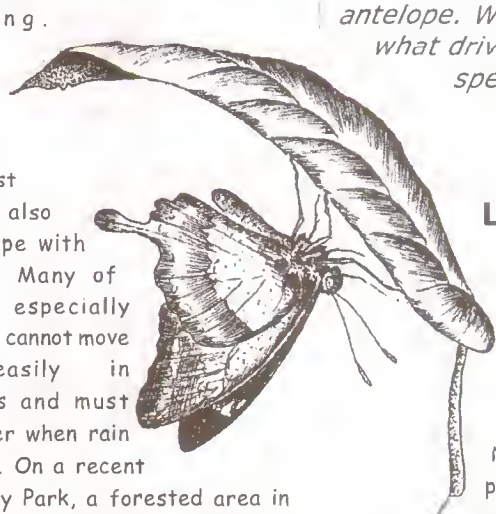
The NatureKenya Newsletter www.naturekenya.org July 03

NATURALISTS CORNER

Butterflies and Raindrops!

Dino Martins
dinom@elci.org

The heavy rains that have been pounding the country are a welcome relief to many forest creatures. The forests are deliciously damp, filled with a flurry of living things. Fungi, of all shapes and colours, fat frogs, sunning themselves on leaves and innumerable insects. Amongst the legions of insects are many different species of butterflies. These are most obvious on sunny days, around noon, when the forest is warm and sparkling.



However, insects and many other forest creatures, also have to cope with the rains. Many of them, especially butterflies, cannot move about easily in rainstorms and must seek shelter when rain approaches. On a recent visit to City Park, a forested area in Nairobi, I was very lucky to watch a number of butterflies cope with just such a sudden downpour.

Along the edge of the forest, just a few metres from the busy Limuru Road, I watch three different butterflies react to the rain. The butterflies involved are all swallowtails. These are big and brightly coloured butterflies. There are ten species of swallowtail present in City Park, despite its tiny size.

Continued on page 2

TALKS & VIDEOS

The Mysterious Survival

a World of Survival production

Mon 14 July '03, 5:30 p.m. Louis Leakey Hall, National Museums, Nairobi

A story of one of the toughest expeditions undertaken for the Survival series, in a remote region of the Sudan, filming for the first time, the migration of one million white-eared kob antelope. Where are the kob coming from & where do they go; what drives them? This is one of the great African wildlife spectacles rivalling the massive wildebeest herds.

FIELD TRIPS

L. Elementaita

Sat 26 July '03

Guided walk along the shores of Lake Elementaita. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Museum car park, Nairobi and bring a picnic lunch, hat and water. Book at the Nature Kenya office with 300/- by Friday 18 July 03.

Trip to the 13th Safaricom Maralal Camel Derby

Fri 8 August - Sun 10 August 03

Organised by the Kenya Museum Society

The Camel Derby, this year will feature an amateur, a semi-professional and a professional race.

You can decide to enter a race @ 1000/- when you get there! Camels and handlers available for hire @ 2500/-

Cost per person 1850/, includes 2 nights camping (Yare Club and Camp) plus meals from Friday dinner to Sunday Lunch.

For more details contact the KMS at 3750136 or info@KenyaMuseumSociety.org

MONITORING

L. Nakuru Waterbird Counts

Sat 26 & Sun 27 July '03

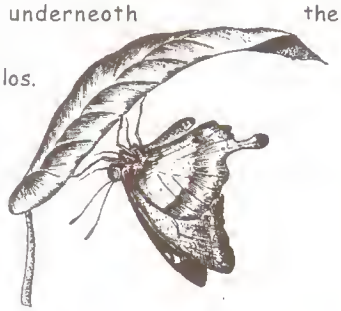
For more details on the mid year waterbird counts contact Alfred Owino at the Ornithology Department, National Museums of Kenya, email: alfred.owino@africaonline.co.ke

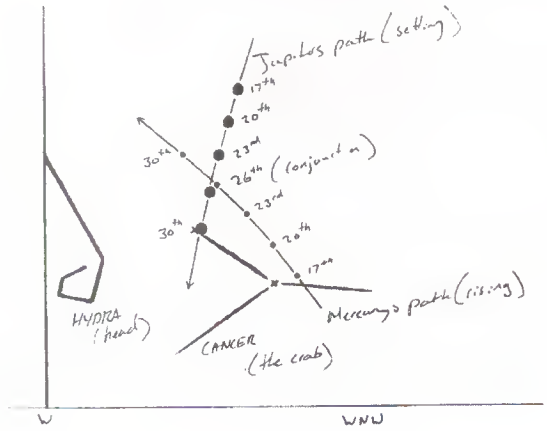
Naturalist Corner continued from page 1

The sunshine, bright ond strong, streoms from o ropidly darkening sky. A Green-potch Swollowtoil *Papilio phorcas* donces olong the troiling edge of the forest. Above it, sweeping olong the tree-taps, a bright yellaw-achre Noble Swollowtoil *Papilio nobilis*, potrols bock ond forth. Flaating between the edge af the farest and a grassy verge, a cream-and-black Macker Swallawtail *P. dardanus* mokes its way.

The sun quickly disoppeors behind o swelling blonket of cloud. As the blue potches of sky ore swollowed, the shodows of the forest depth grow lorger ond deeper. The temperoture, o comfortoble 25 degrees Celsius, drops ropidly. The Green-potch ond Mocker swollowtoils, quickly flutter under the averhonging branches. I step inta the farest ta watch them. They both settle on the underside of leoves, with their wings folded over their backs slightly parted. Fat, stinging roindrops begin to beot the mosses of leoves obove our heods.

As the roin ropidly builds into o thunderstarm, I notice the Noble Swollowtoil swirling down from the canapy. He flutters with same difficulty inta a cluster af leaves, where he settles, upside-down, holding onto a leaf's edges with his six long legs. A few drops splash and drip amongst the leoves, but the butterflies remoin, for the most port, dry. The starm continues ond I soon hove to retreot to o more substontiol shelter myself! As I leove, the butterflies remoin firmly in ploce, underneoth their leofy umbrellos.





EVENING SKY

By Ian MacKay and Fleur Ng'weno

July Stars

The constellotion Scorpius, the scorpion, is high overhead, o little to the south. Bright stors represent its heod ond clows. A long, curving line of stors forms the toil, with twa stars as the stinger. It is followed by Sogittorius, the Archer, high in the south-eost. The Archer with his bow ond orrow olso looks like o teopot or kettle.

The bright arange star Arcturus is still high in the northwest. Vega, o bright white stor, is lower in the northeost. Below Vego, the constellotion Cygnus, the flying swon, oppeors this month.

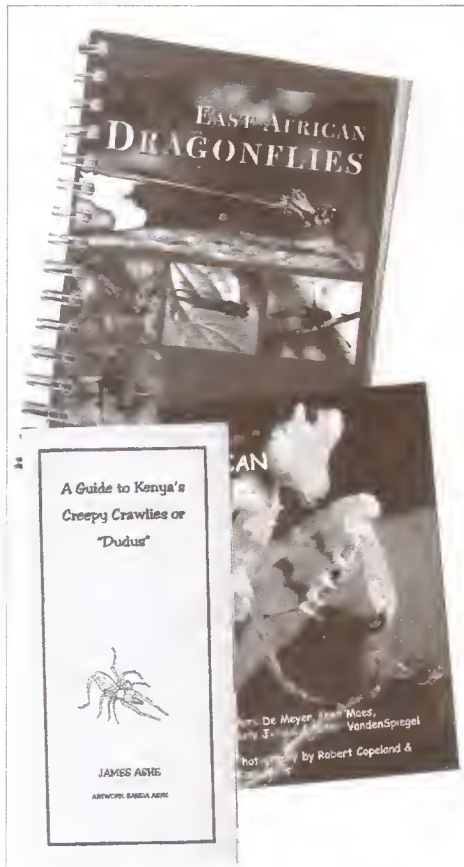
Planets, July 2003

The only plonet visible in our evening sky for the first half af July 2003 is the giant plonet Jupiter, setting in the west. From the 13th, however, there is o slim chonce of spotting the smoll plonet Mercury, low over the horizan. By July 17th, Mercury con be cleorly seen os it rises up towords the setting Jupiter.

On July 26th the twa planets are in canjunction (they oppear to be tagether in the sky). They pass each other, ond Mercury takes the higher pasitian in the sky os Jupiter continues to sink to the horizon. Look out for o spectaculor sight on July 30th, when the new moon is just narth of bath planets.

Moon, June 2003

7 July *first quarter* (averhead at sunset); 13 July *full moon;* 21 July *last quarter* (rises at midnight), 29 July *new moon.*



TALKING SHOP

Three publications on East African insects, now available. Buy or order your copy from the Nature Kenya office!

A Guide to Kenya's Creepy Crawlies or 'Dudus' by James Ashe - a guide to every day encounters with dudus @ 200/-

East African Bugs by Marc de Meyer, Koen Maes, Rudy Jocque & Didier Vanden Spiegel - an illustrated booklet on insects and other terrestrial anthropods @ 750/-

East African Dragonflies by Peter and Kate Miller - a new publication on Dragonfly structure, behaviour and ecology. Anticipated price of about 2000/-, place your order today by calling 3749957 or 3746090!

CLASSIFIEDS

*Reach over **1000** members by advertising in Nature Net*
Rates for Classifieds: • Up to 25 words 250/- • Up to 50 words 500/- Ads • 1/4 page @ 1750/- • 1/2 page @ 3000/- with image +500/-

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

BIRD RINGING

Meet at the Museums' Nairobi Botanic Garden, at 7:00 a.m. every Thursday.

SUNDAY BIRDWATCH

Members meet at the National Museum, Nairobi car park at 9:00 a.m. the third Sunday of every month, **i.e. 20 July**. The members decide where to go. Bring lunch

TREE WALK

Guided Tree Walks in the Arboretum on the second Saturday and last Monday, i.e. **12 & 28 July from 9:30 a.m.** Meet at the Arboretum gate. *Those who are not members of FONA or Nature Kenya pay Ksh 100/- fee on arrival at the gate.*

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRDWALKS

Bird watching walks at sites in and around Nairobi. Meet at the National Museum car park every Wednesday at 8:45 a.m. Return about 12:30 p.m. *Those who are not members can get temporary membership at Ksh 100 per birdwalk, payable on arrival at the car park.*

ARABUKO-SOKOKE (COAST)

The Saturday birdwatch with the Arabuko Sokoke Forest Guides Association is on the first Saturday of each month i.e. **5 July, at 6:30 a.m.** from the Visitor Centre, Gede. Cost 100/- per person. KWS fees may now apply (100/- Citizens, 500/- Residents)

FFJ Bird Walk (Coast)

Friends of Fort Jesus birdwalks are held the third Saturday of each month, i.e. **19 July** Please call Marlene Reid on (011) 491 648 to confirm

Ngong Road Forest Walks (Nairobi)

The Ngong Road Forest Sanctuary Trust Nature walks are held on the first and third Saturdays of the month i.e. **5 & 19 July, at 9:00 a.m.** Meet at the stairs leading to the Restaurant at the Racecourse.

* NEW - Lake Victoria Sunset Birders (Kisumu)

The Lake Victoria Sunset Birders are a Nature Kenya Site Support Group and organise bird wolks at sites in and around Kisumu every Friday of the month. For further details call 035 42952 or email wck@vicweb.net

DECLARATION

Nature Kenya does not accept any responsibility whatsoever in respect of negligence of any of its staff, volunteers or members organising the outings/trips or for any loss, injury, death or damage to property.

IN THE LOOP

2003 international bird photography competition opens

Entries are invited for the 7th International Annual Bird Photography Competition organised by the Birdwatching and Bird Study Association of Slovenia (BirdLife in Slovenia) and Mobitel, Slovenia's national mobile telephone service provider, which is also sponsoring the competition.

2003 is International Year of Freshwater so DOPPS has chosen to highlight waterfowl as the theme of the annual "*Free as a Bird*" competition. Awards will be made for the most striking images of birds in their natural habitat. Amateur and professional photographers are welcome to enter.

The master prize for each of two categories of the competition is approximately 1100 Euros, with a second prize of a digital GSM mobile phone, donated by Mobitel.

The closing date for entries is **3rd September 2003**. Judging will take place by an international panel in October and the awards will be made at a special ceremony and opening of the competition exhibition in Slovenia in November.

For further information, please contact DOPPS-BirdLife Slovenia, by e-mail: dopps@dopps-drustvo.si

the 11th pan-african ornithological congress

PAOC XI

21 – 25 November 2004
Djerba, TUNISIA
PRE-REGISTRATION AND CALL FOR PAPERS

Theme : **"Birds crossing borders – linking people and habitats throughout Africa"**

Convened by Association "Les Amis des Oiseaux", BirdLife in Tunisia

The congress programme is still being developed but will include the following sessions : **• Migration • Waterbird movements and distribution •Transfrontier parks and conservation • Birds in North-African tradition and arts**

Other papers on any topic related to African ornithology and conservation will also be accepted !

Registration fee :
Early (before 20 June 2004)
US$ 300
Late (after 21 June 2004)
US$ 400
Students (proof of student status required) US$ 200

To receive a pre-registration form contact:

Association "Les Amis des Oiseaux" - PAOC XI
Ariana Center, Bureau C 209,
Avenue 18 Janvier 1952,
2080 Ariana, TUNISIA
E-mail: aao.bird@planet.tn

Bird Hotline
3749957

Purple-crested Turaco, Alpine Swift *Savage Camp, Sagana/ May* Nature Kenya field trip

Spotted Ground Thrush (ringed) *Gede Ruins/ May* Calin Jacksan & Nairobi Ringing Graup

Broad-billed Sandpipers, Eurasian Oystercatcher, *Mida Creek,* **Great Snipe**, *Mungatsi Grassland/ May* Itai Shanni

JULY DIARY

Sat 5	ASF Birdwalks & NRF walk
Sat 12	Tree Walk
Mon 14	*The Mysterious Survival*
Sat 19	NRF walk
Sun 20	Sunday Birdwalk
Sat 26	L. Elementaita trip
Mon 28	Tree Walk

Birdwalks every Wednesday Morning
Bird ringing every Thursday Morning

Editor, Catherine Ngarachu